

Florida A&M University
Board of Trustees Special Committee on FAMU DRS
Meeting Minutes

Date	May 12, 2026
Time	4:00 p.m. ET (recording began after brief technical setup)
Format	Hybrid / Zoom
Presiding	Dr. Jamal A. Brown, Chair
Purpose	First meeting of the Special Committee to organize the committee’s work, review the charter, introduce work teams, discuss DRS performance and governance issues, and identify next steps.

1. Attendance / Introductions

- Trustees and Board members noted in the transcript: Dr. Jamal A. Brown, Chair; Trustee Roderick Harris, Vice Chair; Trustee Natalie Figgers; and Trustee Michael White.
- University leadership and support participants noted in the transcript included President Marva Johnson, Kelvin Lawson, Roddrick D. Jones, Brandi Tatum-Fedrick, Joseph Maleszewski, Dr. William Hudson Jr., Tony Lee, and Kimberly Taylor.
- Committee members, DRS representatives, alumni, parents, and invited subject-matter participants noted in the transcript included Monesia Brown, Dr. Tiffany Ardley, Jasmyne Lynn, Dr. Courtney Wright, Roger O. Walker, LaTonya Baker, Dr. Benny Bolden, Floyd Fisher-Blair, Sylvester Beck Sr., Isis Dukes, and others participating in person or by Zoom.
- KPMG representatives were noted as listening to the meeting to inform the risk-discovery engagement.

2. Call to Order and Opening Context

- Chair Brown welcomed participants, addressed brief Zoom/room technical issues, and initiated introductions for trustees, committee members, university leaders, DRS representatives, parents, alumni, and subject-matter participants.
- Chair Brown emphasized that this was the first meeting of the Board of Trustees Special Committee on FAMU DRS and explained that the committee would develop recommendations to be funneled through the trustee committee structure to the full Board of Trustees.
- No formal motions or votes were recorded in the transcript.

3. Committee Charter Review

- Chair Brown reviewed the committee charter as the guiding document for the committee’s work and described it as the committee’s “North Star.”
- The charter responsibilities discussed included strengthening governance and organizational structure; improving academic quality and student outcomes; advancing college and career pathways; building pipeline partnerships with FAMU colleges, units, and external partners; supporting innovation and research; reviewing facilities and capital needs; recommending accountability metrics; coordinating consultant support; and strengthening community engagement strategies.
- No questions on the charter were recorded before the committee moved into the work-team structure.

4. Work-Team Structure

Chair Brown introduced six work teams intended to carry the committee’s work through objectives, work plans, accountability measures, and milestones. Members were asked to identify one or more teams aligned with their expertise and interests.

Team	Name	Primary Focus
1	KPI, Accountability, Governance & School Performance Metrics	School-grade metrics, key performance indicators, dashboards, data organization, board/advisory reporting, accountability measures, and alignment with best practices. Trustee Harris agreed to work with this team.
2	Academic Quality, Instruction, Internships & College of Education Alignment	Instructional quality, academic supports, internships/residencies/clinical placements, certification support, and closing the loop between DRS and the College of Education.
3	College, Career & Pipeline Pathways	Dual enrollment, AA pathways, college/career acceleration, strategic-emphasis programs, FAMU recruitment, and a consistent profile for DRS students entering postsecondary pathways. Chair Brown indicated he would lead this area.
4	Finance, Facilities & Sustainability	Financial models, facilities, capital needs, legislative alignment, long-term viability, and sustainability. Trustee White was noted as interested in this team.
5	Research, Innovation & Pilot Programs	University-affiliated research, pilot programs, grants, campus partnerships, model-school practices, and K-12 research opportunities.
6	Community, Alumni & Engagement	Parent engagement, alumni involvement, advisory council alignment, community partnerships, communication strategies, and trust-building.

5. Strategic Planning, KPIs, and Data Governance

- VP Rodrick D. Jones described the role of the Office of Strategic Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Effectiveness in monitoring institutional goals, establishing benchmarks and performance metrics, assigning data custodians, and reporting progress.
- The committee discussed applying a similar approach to DRS, including a macro performance framework tied to the charter and a more detailed strategic-planning framework with goals, objectives, and alignment to the university's strategic plan.
- Members noted the need for documents and reports that are accessible, data-driven, and tied to measurable outcomes rather than general descriptions.

6. College, Career, and Pipeline Pathways

- Chair Brown framed dual enrollment and AA pathways as major opportunities for DRS students and for FAMU's broader student-success and performance-funding goals.
- Dr. William Hudson Jr. discussed the role of Student Affairs across the student lifespan, including recruitment, admissions, financial aid, mentoring, TRIO programs, and student services.
- The committee discussed models where students begin acceleration early, ideally by middle school, so high school students can graduate with significant credits, AA completion, or a clear pathway into FAMU programs of strategic emphasis.
- Members emphasized that the goal should not be isolated student participation, but a consistent DRS graduate profile: research-prepared, dual-enrolled, able to present scholarly work, and prepared to enter FAMU or other postsecondary pathways with momentum.

7. Research and Campus-Based Student Supports

- Dr. Tiffany Ardley described opportunities for dual-enrolled DRS students to participate in mentored undergraduate research if they have a FAMU student ID.
- The Office of Undergraduate Research can connect eligible students with faculty mentors and, where appropriate, paid opportunities through the Rattler Researcher Program.
- An example was shared of a DRS student who began research before entering FAMU, presented at the undergraduate research symposium, and received a competitive biomedical research award.
- The committee discussed the need to inventory campus programs that could benefit DRS students, including math support, chemistry support, research mentoring, K-12 STEM outreach, tutoring, and other university resources.

8. School Grade, Performance Data, and Instructional Concerns

- The committee reviewed school-grade data. The transcript reflects that DRS was discussed as having an overall C grade for 2024-25, with high school at B, elementary at C, and middle school at D when disaggregated.
- Graduation rate and college/career acceleration were identified as relative strengths, with graduation discussed at approximately 97%.
- Members raised concern that comparisons to all Leon County Schools may not provide a precise benchmark and recommended comparisons to other Florida lab schools and best-in-class models.
- Dr. Bolden discussed large gaps when comparing DRS to other lab-school peers, including ELA and math achievement concerns, and emphasized the need to start acceleration and intervention earlier than high school.
- Dr. Courtney Wright identified teacher certification, reading performance, and intervention strategy as areas requiring deeper review, including possible College of Education involvement in tutoring and academic support.
- Trustee Harris and other participants requested more detailed information on specific strategies and interventions being used to affect school-grade metrics.

9. Staffing Plan, Strategic Plan, and Accountability Documentation

- Members discussed the need for a staffing plan that does more than list names. The staffing plan should connect positions, funding sources, student needs, accountability metrics, school-grade components, curriculum, master schedule, and teacher credentials.
- Concerns were raised about certified teachers, certification alignment to assigned courses, and the risk of students being taught in tested areas by teachers not certified in those areas.
- The committee discussed the need for intervention-tracking documentation by elementary, middle, and high school levels because standards and strategies differ across grade bands.
- Dr. Wright requested review of DRS's strategic plan or growth implementation plan. The response in the discussion was that the plan should be shared, but members noted that the existing strategic plan appeared insufficiently data-driven and metrics-based.
- The committee also discussed the School Improvement Plan, School Advisory Council materials, and the need for documents that allow committee members to understand the data and make actionable recommendations.

10. Accreditation Report Overview

- Chair Brown summarized the accreditation report at a high level, noting strong marks in areas related to data review, assessment, and interpretation of findings.
- The lower-scoring area discussed involved completing and implementing plans to close gaps after needs are identified.
- The committee discussed the need for stronger feedback loops: when student performance or instructional gaps are identified, teachers and administrators should receive guidance, training, support, and follow-up.

11. Fundraising, Partnerships, and Wraparound Resources

- VP Brandi Tatum-Fedrick stated that DRS should be integrated into the university’s fundraising strategy, alumni engagement, corporate partnerships, internship pipelines, and innovation-lab opportunities.
- The committee discussed scholarship and pipeline funding models that could support students who complete accelerated pathways and transition into FAMU.
- Isis Dukes described prior partnership work with Self-Help Credit Union, including financial education, workshops, possible savings incentives, and services for students, parents, and faculty.
- Dr. Ardley identified an existing Department of Education math-foundation grant using FAMU tutors to support DRS students with ALEKS math preparation and noted the possibility of engaging the Title III K-12 STEM outreach coordinator.

12. KPMG Governance/Risk-Discovery Engagement

- Joseph Maleszewski explained that concerns about financial and operational matters led his office to examine audit coverage for DRS.
- He noted a gap in audit coverage: FAMU receives annual financial-statement audits and periodic operational audits, while DRS receives Florida Auditor General attention focused largely on teacher certification and student headcount, but the broader DRS financial and operational interfaces are not meaningfully covered by existing audits.
- The engagement with KPMG was described as a governance-focused assessment of risk, not an audit, investigation, or financial review.
- The scope includes interviews, surveys, information requests, benchmarking, best-practice review, and identification of gaps and opportunities related to DRS governance and university interfaces.
- DRS was described as both a school district and part of FAMU, reporting through the College of Education, Provost, and President, with oversight connections involving the Department of Education, Board of Trustees, Academic and Student Affairs Committee, Special Committee, DRS Advisory Board, and School Advisory Council.
- The KPMG engagement was expected to conclude around June 15, 2026, with reporting near the end of the fiscal year.
- Potential Phase 2 items included identifying an operational/financial audit cadence, conducting a landscape assessment, benchmarking DRS against best-in-class models, and translating findings into 1-, 2-, and 3-year targets.

13. Parent, Alumni, Faculty, and Trustee Feedback

- Parents and alumni raised concerns about communication, including elementary, middle, and high school levels operating too separately and parents not consistently receiving information about resources, opportunities, and programs.
- A parent noted that opportunities such as math support and research-related programs were not sufficiently communicated to families, even when students could have benefited from them.
- An alumna/parent described moving a child from DRS to another lab-school environment because of concerns about certification, academic quality, and the lack of visible alignment with a College of Education model.
- President Johnson emphasized that DRS is part of the university’s accountability structure and noted that DRS responsibilities are included in presidential goals.
- Trustee White thanked Chair Brown for elevating DRS, emphasized accountability for acting on assessment findings, and stated that the committee has an important 2- to 3-year window to move DRS forward. He also stated that DRS should be positioned to have a waiting list rather than open seats.

14. Return-on-Investment and Performance-Funding Alignment

- Chair Brown closed by connecting DRS strategy to the university’s performance-based funding and return-on-investment interests.
- He highlighted the potential value of DRS students entering FAMU with AA completion, reduced time to degree, improved retention/graduation prospects, and placement into programs of strategic emphasis.
- The committee discussed FAU’s lab-school model as a potential example of how a lab school can produce students who contribute directly to university mission, performance metrics, and long-term institutional value.

15. Action Items and Follow-Up

#	Responsible Party	Follow-Up Item
1	Kimberly Taylor / Chair Brown	Send the work-team list and next-meeting information to committee members.
2	All committee members	Review the six work teams, identify preferred area(s) of service, and begin preliminary research/work in those areas before the next meeting.
3	Chair Brown / Work-team leads	Provide each team with clear steps, framework, goals, and expected deliverables before or at the next meeting.
4	KPI / Governance team	Conduct deeper review of school-grade data, KPI framework, dashboards, board/advisory reporting, and alignment of DRS metrics to university goals.
5	DRS / University support offices	Provide or refine organizational charts showing how DRS connects to FAMU governance, administration, support units, advisory bodies, and external oversight.
6	DRS / Academic support stakeholders	Provide documentation on intervention tracking, School Improvement Plan implementation, strategic plan/growth plan, and evidence of closing identified performance gaps.

7	DRS / Finance / HR / Academic stakeholders	Develop or request a more detailed staffing plan tying positions to funding sources, curriculum/master schedule, student needs, accountability metrics, and certification alignment.
8	Academic Quality / COE alignment team	Explore College of Education tutoring/support models, certification support, internships, residencies, and teacher-development connections.
9	Research / Innovation team	Inventory campus-based student-support and enrichment resources, including mentored research, math preparation, Title III/K-12 STEM outreach, tutoring, and grant-funded programs.
10	Finance / Advancement / Partnership stakeholders	Explore DRS fundraising integration, alumni engagement, corporate partnerships, innovation labs, scholarship models, and Self-Help Credit Union wraparound financial-education opportunities.
11	KPMG / Audit & Compliance	Continue the Phase 1 risk-discovery engagement and prepare findings/recommendations after the expected June 15 engagement completion.
12	Committee / DRS leadership	Prepare for DRS and staff presentation at the next Board meeting, referenced in the discussion as June 11, 2026.

16. Next Meeting

- The next Special Committee meeting was announced for June 2, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.
- The meeting will be available in person with Zoom access for those unable to attend in person.
- The goal was also stated to have DRS and staff present at the next Board meeting.

17. Adjournment

The meeting concluded following closing comments, the announcement of the next meeting, and thanks to the committee, President Johnson, and university/DRS participants.